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CRS

27 October 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT: Content Control Code

1. This memorandum requests your assistance in supporting the Content Control Code (CCC). At this time, the desired assistance consists primarily of advocating the code with senior officers and, especially, with NSA officials. My minimum objective is to maintain NSA usage at past levels. The long run goal is to have a CCC-like code inscribed on all USIB Intelligence Information Reports by the originator.

2. The CCC is a simple, four-part index which is applied at the point of origin of an Intelligence Information Report. The four parts of the index include an area or country code, a subject code, a subject modifier and an indicator. For example:

DUA/AVIA-V/I.

United Arab Republic air-defense installation.

URU, ICU/FUEL-X/.

USSR and Cuba import/export of fuels.

The code was created under IIC authority and approved for experimental use by USIB in April 1967. The objective at the time of the approval was to test the hypothesis that a Content Control Code could improve both inter-Agency report distribution and intra-agency dissemination.

3. NSA has been using the code for about 45% of its reports and translations, but in the spring of 1970, NSA began to talk about ending its use of the code because no one else was using it and NSA found little benefit deriving from it. In the meantime, however, CCC had become

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important to CRS as an integral part of its machine-assisted dissemination system and as a possible, longer range tool in an automatic information retrieval system. CRS made direct representation to NSA and to the IHC favoring retention of the CCC (a copy of the CRS memorandum to IHC members is attached). As a consequence, the IHC recommended against NSA's dropping the code and also recommended trial by other Intelligence Information Report producers. As of this date, NSA is said to be still concerned about the utility of the CCC but, nevertheless, continues to use it. State is planning for experimental use of a CCC-like code and chairs an IHC working group on the utility of the code.

4. The NSA product is especially suitable for Content Control Coding because:

- Most of the NSA product is received electrically;

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- The NSA message is relatively simple; most refer to one subject, use limited vocabularies (as compared with a Department of State Information Report) and are relatively short;
- A large portion of NSA reports are formatted and repetitive; consequently, coding can be repetitive, thus requiring virtually no effort on the part of the originator of the report.

5. In CRS studies on machine-assisted dissemination, the code serves as a lens by which text processing software packages can view the content of a message with significantly more precision than if the text were examined without aid. NSA's use of the code decreases by a factor of at least ten the size of the computer dictionary required to process the CRS machine-assisted dissemination program. This has significant effect on the accuracy, cost, and speed of the CRS system. Use of the CCC or a similar device also significantly increases the portion of the total NSA total message flow that is amenable to machine-assisted dissemination without a risk of unacceptable over-dissemination.

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25X1A5a1 [] 6. Preliminary investigation by a CRS consultant, [] suggests that the CCC, modified to provide greater accuracy without additional complexity, can have value as a tool in a shallow information retrieval system. Additional study is required before a system can be planned but one presently seems probable before the end of 1972 if the CCC can be retained and possibly improved.

7. The sum of the cumulative CRS knowledge and experience points to the inevitability of some sort of source coding for information reports. The CCC is a reasonable first step and can be easily improved. Abandonment would be necessarily temporary, would add to the cost of the eventual implementation of a replacement, and delay the increasingly obvious benefits stemming from the use of a source coding system.

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H. C. EISENBEISS

Director, Central Reference Service

Attachment: a/s

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